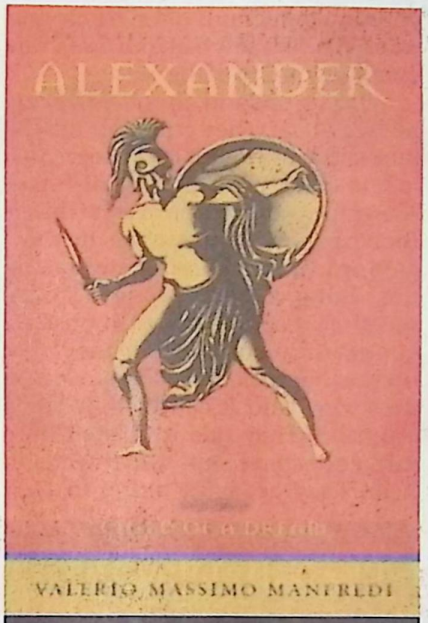


Alexander Trilogy

By Valerio Massimo Manfredi

Reviewed byEfadul Huq



IT is very easy to write the biographies of kings who now sleep quietly in their tombs, satisfied with the lavish lives they led and the glories heaped on them by their court scribes. But how should one describe a king who inspires awe even till today in the intellectual minds of the society? How is it possible to write a transparent biography of a king who is surrounded by the miasma of mythologies that the ages have spawned around him? Will it be possible for any author to peer through the veil of rumours, omens and exaggerated tales to reach the true story behind this king who in Egypt was revered as God?

Not as an answer but more like a question comes Valerio Massimi Manfredi's *Alexander Trilogy's* first book: *Child Of A Dream*. Born to the short-tempered Philip of Macedon and his sensuous queen Olympias, Alexander grows up to be a young man of enormous potential. Aristotle's close care and with the friendship of Ptolemy and Hephaiston, he emerges as the most talented warrior of Greece, gathering the broken nations under one league to launch a war against their eternal enemy the Persians. After the dramatic start of this novel which is sure to leave a lasting effect on the minds of readers until the very end of the trilogy, the story moves with a pace of a thriller and after 447 pages puts a full stop for the readers to breathe knowing in mind that the next adventure is by far the greatest in history conquering Asia!

The second book: *Sands Of Ammon* starts of once again with a breathtaking pace and attention-gripping descriptions. The entrance of a seer in the scene to the bold decisions Alexander makes compel any reader to conclude that this book is no less than the first, rather better at times. Alexander has decided to conquer the never-ending empire of the Persian king Darius who surely is more powerful in manpower, wealth and weapons. But it is the brave heart of Alexander that encourages his lesser group of soldiers and wins him battles. The legendary Halicarnassus, Tyre and Towers of Gaza none withstands the wrath of the great king, he mashes them all to dust. Unhindered, the war hero moves on to Egypt and in the oracle of Ammon, the revelation of a truth adds brightness to his already dazzling stature. Alexander is much more convinced about his godly bloodline and whispers flutter in the air that *'he is invincible'*.

The Ends Of The Earth, the last book penetrates into the core of Asia and moves on towards the enigmatic unseen India. The *invincible* army under the leadership of Alexander marches on to further east ruining the beautiful Babylon and setting aflame the palace of Persepolis. Alexander's ambition reaches a new height to unite the people of his united Greece and the conquered lands under one banner. This raises questions back in his homeland but turns out to be a matter of pride for the conquered subjects. Like a catalyst, the exotic beauty of Queen Roxana nourishes Alexander to follow his dream and fulfill his destiny...

A spectacular end awaits the readers!

Manfredi, as I said before hasn't answered any of the questions I asked in the beginning, instead posed some more. He surely was unable to be unaffected by the myths revolving around Alexander. But through his detailed descriptions, engrossing story-telling I realized, what would the biography of Alexander turn out to be without the myths? Would it be any different from a general history book? Would Alexander really be as famous as he is today?

And since so much has been concocted about this man called Alexander, there must have been something about him that triggered the imagination of the people around. After all, in every ton of false there is at least half a pound of truth!

The first book is available at Boi Bichitra, Dhanmondi. And once you are hooked by the first one, I believe you'll manage the other two from any corner of the world, just like me!